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Item 7 of the provisional agenda*

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Twenty-fourth session of the Commission/ fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers

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Item 6 of the provisional agenda**

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RESOLUTIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL AT ITS SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF 1988 AND BY THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FORTY-THIRD SESSION IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECTORS THAT ARE OF INTEREST TO AFRICA

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1. The objective of the present document is to report to the meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole, and through it, to the Conference of Ministers on (a) the action taken by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at its second regular session held at Geneva in July 1988 on the resolutions adopted by the Conference of Ministers at its fourteenth meeting and addressed to the Council; (b) the decisions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-third session on the recommendations of ECOSOC concerning these resolutions; and (c) other resolutions and decisions of the Council and the General Assembly in the economic and social sectors which are of interest to Africa.

2. At its fourteenth meeting, which was also the twenty-third (thirtieth anniversary) session of the Commission which was held at the Palais des Congrès, Niamey, the Niger, from 14 to 17 April 1988, the Conference of Ministers adopted 34 resolutions, five of which were addressed to the Economic and Social Council as they called for action by the Council and the United Nations General Assembly. These were: the Khartoum Declaration: Towards a human-focused approach to socio-economic recovery and development in Africa (resolution 631 (XXIII)); United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (resolution 639 (XXIII)); Biennial Report of the Executive Secretary (resolution 646 (XXIII)); Proposals for extension of the 1984-1989 Medium-term Plan to 1990-1991 (resolution 647 (XXIII)) and updating the 1988-1989 programme budget (resolution 648 (XXIII)).

3. The second regular session of 1988 of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 6 to 29 July 1988.

4. During the first day of the informal consultations, three of the ECA resolutions brought to the attention of the Council: resolutions 646 (XXIII) - Biennial Report of the Executive Secretary, resolution 647 (XXIII) - Proposals for extension of the 1984-1989 Medium-Term Plan to 1990-1991 and resolution 648 (XXIII) - Updating of the 1988-1989 programme budget were endorsed without problem. As for the two other resolutions calling for action by the Council, resolutions 631 (XXIII) - Khartoum Declaration: Towards a human-focused approach to socio-economic recovery and development in Africa and 639 (XXIII) - Transport and Communications Decade in Africa, there was a problem. As regards resolution 631 (XXIII), some delegations observed that the role of international agencies was not clearly spelt out and they presented some amendments to the resolution. The amendments were discussed and finally a consensus was reached and the resolution adopted.

5. As for resolution 639 (XXIII) on the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa, there was a real problem. At some stage some delegations questioned the idea of having a second Transport and Communications Decade. After lengthy consultations and explanations by ECA representatives the resolution was amended and adopted by consensus.

6. As is the practice, all resolutions adopted by ECOSOC, should also go to the General Assembly for final adoption. Consequently, the aforementioned resolutions together with other resolutions of interest to Africa which were adopted by ECOSOC such as inclusion of Mozambique in the least developed countries, were transmitted to the forty-third session of the General Assembly for adoption.

7. Among the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly were the ECA resolutions referred to above. Other resolutions of interest to Africa adopted by the General Assembly are the following:

8. Resolution 43/12 on Co-operation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. In this resolution, the General Assembly commends the continued efforts of the Organization of African Unity to promote multilateral co-operation among African States and to find solutions to African problems of vital importance to the international community, reaffirms that the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, (UN-PAAERD) is the responsibility of the international community as a whole and commends the efforts undertaken by African countries in spite of the effects of the adverse international economic environment. It also calls upon the Secretary-General of the United Nations to continue to ensure closer co-operation and co-ordination with the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity in the implementation and monitoring of the UN-PAAERD as well as in the search for solutions to Africa's debt-servicing burden, taking into account Africa's Common Position on its external debt, adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU at its third extraordinary session held from 30 November to 1 December 1987.

9. In resolution 43/27 on the Mid-term Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990, the General Assembly adopted the conclusions on the mid-term review and appraisal of the implementation of the UN-PAAERD consisting of an assessment of the responses and measures to accelerate the implementation of the Programme, as set forth in the annex to the resolution and decided to conduct a final review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme at its forty-sixth session. (For details of the outcome of the mid-term review and appraisal of the implementation of the UN-PAAERD, see document E/ECA/CM.15/4).

10. The General Assembly in resolution 43/53 on Protection of global climate for present and future generation of mankind, urges governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and scientific institutions to treat climate change as a priority issue; to undertake and promote specific, co-operative and action-oriented programmes and research so as to increase understanding on all sources and causes of climate change, including its regional aspects as well as the cause and effect relationship between human activities and climate; and to contribute,

as appropriate, with human and financial resources to efforts to protect the global climate. It calls upon governments and intergovernmental organizations to collaborate in making every effort to prevent detrimental effects on climate and other activities affecting the ecological balance and also calls upon non-governmental organizations, industry and other productive sectors to play their role. In this resolution, the General Assembly encourages the convening of conferences on climate change, particularly global warming, at the national, regional and global levels in order to make the international community better aware of the importance of dealing effectively and in a timely manner with all aspects of climate change resulting from certain human activities.

11. In resolution 43/182 on Preparation for an international development strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the General Assembly decided to establish an ad hoc Committee of the Whole for the preparation of the international development strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, and requested the ad hoc Committee to submit a progress report to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session for its consideration, with a view to finalizing the strategy in time for its adoption in 1990. It invited the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the regional commissions and other organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system to include in their agenda during 1989 items regarding their contribution to the preparation of the international development strategy. The Commission is accordingly expected to consider its contribution to the preparation of this strategy at this session.

12. In resolution 43/186 on the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the General Assembly after recalling its resolution 42/177 of 11 December 1987, in which it decided to convene the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries at a high level in Paris in September 1990 which was to be preceded in the spring of 1989 by one session of the Meeting of Governmental Experts, Donor Countries and Multilateral and Bilateral Financial and Technical Assistance Institutions with representatives of the least developed countries and in early 1990 by one session of the Intergovernmental Group on the Least Developed Countries, as preparatory committee for the second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, calls upon all governments, intergovernmental and multilateral institutions and others concerned to take appropriate steps to ensure that adequate preparations are made for the Conference and to participate effectively in the two above-mentioned preparatory meetings, as well as in the Conference itself. It requested all concerned organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to submit, before the first preparatory meeting, reports containing a review of the implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries within their fields of competence and proposals for further action as input to the preparations for the Conference.

13. As far as ECA is concerned this issue will be discussed by the eighth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of African Least Developed Countries from 22 to 24 March 1989 and by the ninth meeting of the Conference of Ministers of the African Least Developed Countries whose report (E/ECA/CM.15/39) will be presented to the Conference of Ministers.

14. In resolution 43/189 on Specific measures in favour of island developing countries, the General Assembly urged relevant organizations of the United Nations system to take adequate measures to respond positively to the particular needs of island developing countries and to report on such measures, as appropriate. It requests the Secretary-General to convene a meeting of governmental experts of island developing countries and donor countries and organizations to review the problems of island developing countries and propose appropriate concrete action with respect to those countries.

15. Resolution 43/190 on Strengthening technical co-operation among developing countries in food and agriculture called upon the developing countries, in the context of their primary responsibility for promoting technical co-operation among themselves, to place greater emphasis on their technical co-operation in food and agriculture and to strengthen and improve the mechanisms for such co-operation at the national, subregional and regional levels, especially their national focal points, so as to facilitate policy co-ordination and exchange of experience.

16. In another resolution related to food (43/191 on food and agricultural problems) the General Assembly stresses the urgent need for substantial progress in stimulating food production in developing countries and the importance of increasing domestic food production, thereby stimulating national economic growth and social progress in those countries, in particular in Africa and the least developed countries, and helping to resolve the problems of hunger and malnutrition in an effective way. It calls for a joint effort by all States and relevant international and intergovernmental organizations to improve the food situation and protect the nutritional levels of affected groups, in particular low-income groups, especially during the implementation of structural adjustment programmes. The General Assembly also in this resolution stresses the need for co-ordinated international action to tackle the long-term problems of migratory pest control, particularly in Africa, and while expressing gratitude for the support of donors and recognizing the efforts made by the affected countries in the fight against grasshopper and locust infestation, calls upon donors to continue to give high priority to the implementation and continued co-ordination by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations of emergency control programmes, as well as long-term measures, against grasshoppers and locusts currently affecting vast areas of Africa as well as other regions of the developing world, and to remain prepared to provide financial and technical assistance to affected countries at short notice.

17. In a related resolution - resolution 43/203 International strategy for the fight against locust and grasshopper infestation particularly in Africa - the General Assembly expresses its deep concern at the worsening locust and grasshopper infestation, especially in Africa, which may adversely affect food production and result in renewed famine. It reaffirms the need to accord the highest priority to locust and grasshopper control and eradication, and calls upon donor countries and organizations to continue to assist the affected countries to strengthen their control capacity by making available to them, particularly at the current critical stage, inter alia, reconnaissance and spraying aircraft, means of transport and liaison, degradable insecticides, spraying equipment, and, where necessary, specialized technicians and to continue this assistance as long as the infestation lasts. It urges the multilateral financial and development institutions, including the United Nations Development Programme, to give high priority, within the framework of their activities, to the fight against locust and grasshopper infestation and to grant financial and technical assistance to the affected countries, particularly those which have issued appeals for international assistance or have declared a state of emergency. The General Assembly also encourages the Secretary-General to keep under review the question of the locust and grasshopper infestation, particularly in Africa, and to undertake, in consultation with the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the necessary action to make the world community more aware of the disastrous cumulative consequences of locust and grasshopper infestation, specifically with respect to food security.

18. In resolution 43/195 on International co-operation for the eradication of poverty in developing countries, the regional commissions are requested in operative paragraph 2, in accordance with their mandates, to contribute more effectively to the strengthening of regional and subregional co-operation and to study options, including new approaches oriented towards the revitalization of growth and development in developing countries, in order to enable them to address effectively the eradication of poverty.

19. In resolution 43/198 on External debt crisis and development: Towards a durable solution of the debt problems, the General Assembly invites the international financial institutions to continue to review conditionality criteria, taking into account, inter alia, social objectives, growth and development priorities of developing countries and changing conditions of the world economy, and stresses further the need for increased co-operation between the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other multilateral financial institutions, which should not lead to cross conditionality. It reaffirms that a major objective of any debt strategy should be that debtor developing countries achieve an adequate level of growth sufficient to enable them to satisfy their socio-economic development needs, which will in turn enhance their ability to service debt, and urges all relevant parties to develop new ways and means to sustain effectively policies aimed at attaining such a level of growth. It recognizes that efforts to resolve the debt problem should include, inter alia, policies

in creditor and debtor countries that are supportive of export growth and diversification in the latter.

20. In resolution 43/212 on Responsibility of States for the protection of the environment: Prevention of the illegal international traffic in, and the dumping and resulting accumulation of, toxic and dangerous products and waste affecting the developing countries in particular, the General Assembly urges all States, bearing in mind their respective responsibilities, to take the necessary legal and technical measures in order to halt and prevent the illegal international traffic in, and the dumping and resulting accumulation of, toxic and dangerous products and wastes; it also urges all States generating toxic and dangerous wastes to make every effort to treat and dispose of them in the country of origin to the maximum extent possible consistent with environmentally sound disposal.

21. On social matters, the General Assembly adopted many resolutions some which are discussed below.

22. In resolution 43/93 on the Implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging and related activities, the General Assembly recommends that aging should be considered a priority theme in both the proposed Medium-term Plan for the period starting in 1992 and in the elaboration of an international development strategy for the Fourth Development Decade (1991-2000) and calls upon the specialized agencies, regional commissions and other funding organizations concerned to continue to support activities relating to the question of aging, in particular by providing assistance for projects that fall within their mandate.

23. In resolution 43/94 on Question of youth, the General Assembly, inter alia, calls upon all States, all governmental and non-governmental organizations, interested United Nations bodies, in particular, the Economic and Social Council through its Commission for Social Development, and specialized agencies to continue to give priority to the formulation and implementation of effective measures for securing the exercise by youth of the right to education and to work, with a view to resolving the problem of unemployment among youth; calls upon Member States to pay increased attention to the promotion of youth employment in all sectors of the economy in order to enable more young people to obtain appropriate education and vocational training, thereby facilitating their integration into social and professional life.

24. The General Assembly, in resolution 43/99 on Crime prevention and criminal justice, calls upon all States to become actively involved in the preparation for the eighth Congress, to participate in the regional preparatory meetings to be held in 1989 and to be represented in the quinquennial Congress at a high level, and encourages the intergovernmental

and non-governmental organizations concerned and the professional community, whose substantive contributions to the Congress have always been of great value, to continue to collaborate in the research and other preparatory activities for the eighth Congress.

25. In resolution 43/101 on the Implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, the General Assembly, inter alia, reaffirms the need for the Forward-looking Strategies to be translated immediately into concrete action by governments, as determined by overall national priorities, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. It requests the Secretary-General to invite governments, organizations of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions and the specialized agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to report periodically, through the Commission on the Status of Women, to the Economic and Social Council on activities undertaken at all levels to implement the Forward-looking Strategies.

26. In its resolution 43/113 on International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa, the General Assembly, inter alia, calls upon the international community to provide increased assistance to the countries of Southern Africa so as to enable them to strengthen their capacity to provide the necessary facilities and services for the care and well-being of the refugees, returnees and displaced persons in their countries. It endorses the Oslo Declaration and Plan of Action on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa adopted by the Conference.

27. The General Assembly also adopted resolutions concerning special economic assistance to African countries facing particular problems such as special economic assistance to Chad, emergency assistance to Somalia, assistance to Mozambique, special assistance to the front-line States, assistance to Benin, the Central African Republic, Djibouti, and Madagascar.

28. Other resolutions concerning refugees, returnees and displaced persons which the General Assembly adopted relate to:

(a) Situation of refugees in the Sudan;

(b) Humanitarian assistance to refugees in Djibouti;

(c) Emergency assistance to voluntary returnees and displaced persons in Chad;

(d) Assistance to refugees and returnees in Ethiopia;

(e) Assistance to refugees in Somalia;

(f) Assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Malawi; and

(g) Assistance to student refugees in Southern Africa.

29. The secretariat will take the necessary steps where it has not already done so, to take into account the provisions of these resolutions in the revisions and finalization of the programme of work and priorities and the next Medium-term Plan.